

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
MR. DARRELL ISSA**

**House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Full Committee Hearing**

“Political Interference with Science: Global Warming, Part II”

Monday, March 19, 2007

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I am glad to have the opportunity to continue with our Committee’s inquiry into political interference with science. As you know, this investigation began under Chairman Davis and it is good to see that some projects have been carried over into the new Congress. I want to take a moment to point out that the title of today’s hearing is “Political Interference with Science: Global Warming.”

I am glad, Mr. Chairman, you have made it clear from the outset that this investigation is related to *process* and not the *substance* of climate change science. Today we are not attempting to establish which scientific facts are correct or which policies are better. I commend you on this approach. As you know, this Committee’s job is to conduct oversight in an independent and bi-partisan way, and to present the facts as they are—and not as we want them to be.

But, even though this hearing isn’t about substance, let me be clear from the beginning. Climate change is an important issue and deserves our levelheaded attention. I believe that climate change is happening. I believe global mean temperatures have increased over the past century and that carbon dioxide is a contributing factor.

It wasn't very long ago that scientists were unable to make this statement with certainty because we simply didn't have a sufficient body of knowledge. And, it's important to acknowledge that American ingenuity, know-how, and resources make up the foundation of this ever-expanding body of knowledge. Climate change is too important an issue not to continue backing research. And it is essential that policymakers have the absolute best available science to support policy decisions that will impact future generations of Americans and citizens around the globe.

But, again, we are looking at this as a *process* issue so let's turn to allegations that the Bush Administration has silenced scientists and rewritten the science.

Dr. Roger Pielke, Jr. testified at our last hearing that the Bush Administration probably hasn't done itself any favors with what he termed "hyper-controlling strategies for the management of information." I would probably agree. Yet it remains the prerogative of the Bush Administration—as with every Administration before it and, likely, after it—to establish policies to ensure that whatever is coming out of Federal agencies is consistent and coordinated. Submitting to those rules is a fact of life for every Federal employee.

I was concerned when Dr. Pielke said "[m]any scientists are increasingly engaging in political advocacy" and that "[s]ome issues of science have become increasingly partisan as some politicians sense that there is political gain to be found on issues like stem cells, teaching of evolution and climate change." I hope we keep this observation in mind during our hearings and this investigation into allegations of silencing and editing by the Bush Administration and Mr. Cooney.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and I especially look forward to hearing from NASA scientist Dr. James Hansen. Dr. Hansen, we recognize you are a preeminent climate change scientist and one of the leading researchers on the issues. We value your contribution to the scientific understanding on global climate change. I want to hear about your experiences with the politicization of science. However, I also plan to discuss with you your own efforts to politicize science.

You are a career NASA employee, but it seems that these days most of your speeches and testifying are done as "a private citizen." But, because of your notoriety, I don't know if it is possible to separate you from NASA. It seems to me that everything you say gets imputed back to NASA—whether it's in the US or the foreign press. Even so, you continue to willfully violate NASA media policies even going so far as to say that you "ignored the restrictions." You complain the Bush Administration is silencing you, but you are the most frequently quoted climate scientist on Earth.

You are known for embracing alarmist viewpoints, and you have embraced the idea that exaggeration is okay to get the public's attention. But, two climate researchers from the Royal Meteorological Society from the United Kingdom just this week said that this "catastrophism" and "Hollywoodization" of weather and climate create the real confusion in the public's minds. You seem to forget that when you speak, regardless of your disclaimers, you are speaking for NASA.

And, you also have not shied away from the political realm. You publicly endorsed Senator John Kerry in the 2004 Presidential election. Three years earlier you received a \$250,000 unrestricted cash prize from Teresa Heinz Kerry on behalf of the Heinz Foundation. You have spent the better of this decade consistently and publicly criticizing the Bush Administration's climate change policies. But, at the same time, you are an advocate for campaign finance reform and make a point of condemning other scientists' affiliations with "special interests."

I guess I am a little confused. Are you a scientist, or are you a politician? Because when I put together your political advocacy and—I hate to say it but—the partisanship of that advocacy, I am inclined to think you are the one who is politicizing science.

It's unfortunate the Majority has decided to place Dr. Roy Spencer at the tail end of this hearing and without any company. Dr. Spencer worked at NASA under—among others—the Clinton Administration and, in fact, was awarded the NASA Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal. Dr. Hansen, if you are still here for the third panel, you will hear Dr. Spencer testify that when he was a NASA employee, he knew that talking to the press was to be organized through management and public affairs. You will also hear Dr. Spencer testify that he knew working at NASA was a privilege—not a right—and that, if didn't he like the rules, he could leave—which is in fact what he eventually did.

Well, I think I'll stop here, but before I do, Dr. Spencer, I would like to apologize for your treatment by this Committee. Your experiences are highly germane to the testimony offered by the first panel, so it is completely beyond me why the Majority would isolate you—and, no less, during a hearing to discuss silencing scientists based upon what they have to say! What else can I say but to apologize again on behalf of the Committee.

I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.